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## COLONEL INGERSOLL ON CHRISTIANITY.\*

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### SOME REMARKS ON HIS REPLY TO DR. FIELD.

As a listener from across the broad Atlantic to the clash of arms in the combat between Colonel Ingersoll and Dr. Field on the most momentous of all subjects, I have not the personal knowledge which assisted these doughty champions in making reciprocal acknowledgments, as broad as could be desired, with reference to personal character and motive. Such acknowledgments are of high value in keeping the issue clear, if not always of all adventitious, yet of all venomous matter. Destitute of the experience on which to found them as original testimonies, still, in attempting partially to criticise the remarkable Reply of Colonel Ingersoll, I can both accept in good faith what has been said by Dr. Field, and add that it seems to me consonant with the strain of the pages I have set before me. Having said this, I shall allow myself the utmost freedom in remarks, which will be addressed exclusively to the matter, not the man.

Let me begin by making several acknowledgments of another kind, but which I feel to be serious. The Christian Church has lived long enough in external triumph and prosperity to expose those of whom it is composed to all such perils of error and mis-

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feasance, as triumph and prosperity bring with them. Belief in divine guidance is not of necessity belief that such guidance can never be frustrated by the laxity, the infirmity, the perversity of man, alike in the domain of action and in the domain of thought. Believers in the perpetuity of the life of the Church are not tied to believing in the perpetual health of the Church. Even the great Latin Communion, and that Communion even since the Council of the Vatican in 1870, theoretically admits, or does not exclude, the possibility of a wide range of local and partial error in opinion as well as conduct. Elsewhere the admission would be more unequivocal. Of such errors in tenet, or in temper and feeling more or less hardened into tenet, there has been a crop alike abundant and multifarious. Each Christian party is sufficiently apt to recognize this fact with regard to every other Christian party; and the more impartial and reflective minds are aware that no party is exempt from mischiefs, which lie at the root of the human constitution in its warped, impaired, and dislocated condition. Naturally enough, these deformities help to indispose men towards belief; and when this indisposition has been developed into a system of negative warfare, all the faults of all the Christian bodies, and sub-divisions of bodies, are, as it was natural to expect they would be, carefully raked together, and become part and parcel of the indictment against the divine scheme of redemption. I notice these things in the mass, without particularity, which might be invidious, for two important purposes. First, that we all, who hold by the Gospel and the Christian Church, may learn humility and modesty, as well as charity and indulgence, in the treatment of opponents, from our consciousness that we all, alike by our exaggerations and our shortcomings in belief, no less than by faults of conduct, have contributed to bring about this condition of fashionable hostility to religious faith: and, secondly, that we may resolutely decline to be held bound to tenets, or to consequences of tenets, which represent not the great Christendom of the past and present, but only some hole and corner of its vast organization; and not the heavenly treasure, but the rust or the canker to which that treasure has been exposed through the incidents of its custody in earthen vessels.

I do not remember ever to have read a composition, in which the merely local coloring of particular, and even very limited sec-

tions of Christianity, was more systematically used as if it had been available and legitimate argument against the whole, than in the Reply before us. Colonel Ingersoll writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy, but also with an impetus which he seems unable to control. Denunciation, sarcasm, and invective, may in consequence be said to constitute the staple of his work ; and, if argument or some favorable admission here and there peeps out for a moment, the writer soon leaves the dry and barren heights for his favorite and more luxurious galloping grounds beneath. Thus, when the Reply has consecrated a line (N. A. R., No. 372, p. 473) to the pleasing contemplation of his opponent as "manly, candid, and generous," it immediately devotes more than twelve to a declamatory denunciation of a practice (as if it were his) altogether contrary to generosity and to candor, and reproaches those who expect (*ibid.*) "to receive as alms an eternity of joy." I take this as a specimen of the mode of statement which permeates the whole Reply. It is not the statement of an untruth. The Christian receives as alms all whatsoever he receives at all. *Qui salvandos salvas gratis* is his song of thankful praise. But it is the statement of one-half of a truth, which lives only in its entirety, and of which the Reply gives us only a mangled and bleeding *frustum*. For the gospel teaches that the faith which saves is a living and energizing faith, and that the most precious part of the alms which we receive lies in an ethical and spiritual process, which partly qualifies for, but also and emphatically composes, this conferred eternity of joy. Restore this ethical element to the doctrine from which the Reply has rudely displaced it, and the whole force of the assault is gone, for there is now a total absence of point in the accusation; it comes only to this, that "mercy and judgment are met together," and that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10).

Perhaps, as we proceed, there will be supplied ampler means of judging whether I am warranted in saying that the instance I have here given is a normal instance of a practice so largely followed as to divest the entire Reply of that calmness and sobriety of movement which are essential to the just exercise of the reasoning power in subject matter not only grave, but solemn. Pascal has supplied us, in the "Provincial Letters," with an unique example of easy, brilliant, and fascinating treatment of a theme both profound and complex. But where shall we find another

Pascal ? And, if we had found him, he would be entitled to point out to us that the famous work was not less close and logical than it was witty. In this case, all attempt at continuous argument appears to be deliberately abjured, not only as to pages, but, as may almost be said, even as to lines. The paper, noteworthy as it is, leaves on my mind the impression of a battle-field where every man strikes at every man, and all is noise, hurry, and confusion. Better surely had it been, and worthier of the great weight and elevation of the subject, if the controversy had been waged after the pattern of those engagements where a chosen champion on either side, in a space carefully limited and reserved, does battle on behalf of each silent and expectant host. The promiscuous crowds represent all the lower elements which enter into human conflicts : the chosen champions, and the order of their proceeding, signify the dominion of reason over force, and its just place as the sovereign arbiter of the great questions that involve the main destiny of man.

I will give another instance of the tumultuous method in which the Reply conducts, not, indeed, its argument, but its case. Dr. Field had exhibited an example of what he thought superstition, and had drawn a distinction between superstition and religion. But to the author of the Reply all religion is superstition, and, accordingly, he writes as follows (p. 475) :

“ You are shocked at the Hindoo mother, when she gives her child to death at the supposed command of her God. What do you think of Abraham ? of Jephthah ? What is your opinion of Jehovah himself ? ”

Taking these three appeals in the reverse order to that in which they are written, I will briefly ask, as to the closing challenge, “ What do you think of Jehovah himself ? ” whether this is the tone in which controversy ought to be carried on ? Not only is the name of Jehovah encircled in the heart of every believer with the profoundest reverence and love, but the Christian religion teaches, through the Incarnation, a doctrine of personal union with God so lofty that it can only be approached in a deep, reverential calm. I do not deny that a person who deems a given religion to be wicked may be led onward by logical consistency to impugn in strong terms the character of the Author and Object of that religion. But he is surely bound by the laws of social morality and decency to consider well the terms and the manner of

his indictment. If he founds it upon allegations of fact, these allegations should be carefully stated, so as to give his antagonists reasonable evidence that it is truth and not temper which wrings from him a sentence of condemnation, delivered in sobriety and sadness, and not without a due commiseration for those, whom he is attempting to undeceive, who think he is himself both deceived and a deceiver, but who surely are entitled, while this question is in process of decision, to require that He whom they adore should at least be treated with those decent reserves which are deemed essential when a human being, say a parent, wife, or sister, is in question. But here a contemptuous reference to Jehovah follows, not upon a careful investigation of the cases of Abraham and of Jephthah, but upon a mere summary citation of them to surrender themselves, so to speak, as culprits ; that is to say, a summons to accept at once, on the authority of the Reply, the view which the writer is pleased to take of those cases. It is true that he assures us in another part of his paper that he has read the Scriptures with care ; and I feel bound to accept this assurance, but at the same time to add that if it had not been given I should, for one, not have made the discovery, but might have supposed that the author had galloped, not through, but about, the sacred volume, as a man glances over the pages of an ordinary newspaper or novel.

Although there is no argument as to Abraham or Jephthah expressed upon the surface, we must assume that one is intended, and it seems to be of the following kind : “ You are not entitled to reprove the Hindoo mother who cast her child under the wheels of the car of Juggernaut, for you approve of the conduct of Jephthah, who (probably) sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of a vow (Judges xi. 31) that he would make a burnt offering of whatsoever, on his safe return, he should meet coming forth from the doors of his dwelling.” Now the whole force of this rejoinder depends upon our supposed obligation as believers to approve the conduct of Jephthah. It is, therefore, a very serious question whether we are or are not so obliged. But this question the Reply does not condescend either to argue, or even to state. It jumps to an extreme conclusion without the decency of an intermediate step. Are not such methods of proceeding more suited to placards at an election, than to disquisitions on these most solemn subjects ?

I am aware of no reason why any believer in Christianity should not be free to canvass, regret, condemn the act of Jephthah. So far as the narration which details it is concerned, there is not a word of sanction given to it more than to the falsehood of Abraham in Egypt, or of Jacob and Rebecca in the matter of the hunting (Gen. xx. 1-18, and Gen. xxiii.) ; or to the dissembling of Saint Peter in the case of the Judaizing converts (Gal. ii. 11). I am aware of no color of approval given to it elsewhere. But possibly the author of the Reply may have thought he found such an approval in the famous eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle, handling his subject with a discernment and care very different from those of the Reply, writes thus (Heb. xi. 32):

“ And what shall I say more ? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah : of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.”

Jephthah, then, is distinctly held up to us by a canonical writer as an object of praise. But of praise on what account ? Why should the Reply assume that it is on account of the sacrifice of his child ? The writer of the Reply has given us no reason, and no rag of a reason, in support of such a proposition. But this was the very thing he was bound by every consideration to prove, upon making his indictment against the Almighty. In my opinion, he could have one reason only for not giving a reason, and that was that no reason could be found.

The matter, however, is so full of interest, as illustrating both the method of the Reply and that of the Apostolic writer, that I shall enter farther into it, and draw attention to the very remarkable structure of this noble chapter, which is to Faith what the thirteenth of Cor. I. is to Charity. From the first to the thirty-first verse, it commemorates the achievements of faith in ten persons: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses (in greater detail than any one else), and finally Rahab, in whom, I observe in passing, it will hardly be pretended that she appears in this list on account of the profession she had pursued. Then comes the rapid recital (v. 31), without any specification of particulars whatever, of these four names : Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah. Next follows a kind of recommencement, indicated by the word *also* ; and the glorious acts and sufferings of the prophets are set forth largely, with a

singular power and warmth, headed by the names of David and Samuel, the rest of the sacred band being mentioned only in the mass.

Now, it is surely very remarkable that, in the whole of this recital, the Apostle, whose "feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," seems with a tender instinct to avoid anything like stress on the exploits of warriors. Of the twelve persons having a share in the detailed expositions, David is the only warrior, and his character as a man of war is eclipsed by his greater attributes as a prophet, or declarer of the Divine counsels. It is yet more noteworthy that Joshua, who had so fair a fame, but who was only a warrior, is never named in the chapter, and we are simply told that "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven times" (Hebrews xi. 30). But the series of four names, which are given without any specification of their title to appear in the list, are all names of distinguished warriors. They had all done great acts of faith and patriotism against the enemies of Israel,—Gideon against the Midianites, Barak against the hosts of Syria, Samson against the Philistines, and Jephthah against the children of Ammon. Their title to appear in the list at all is in their acts of war, and the mode of their treatment as men of war is in striking accordance with the analogies of the chapter. All of them had committed errors. Gideon had again and again demanded a sign, and had made a golden ephod, "which thing became a snare unto Gideon and to his house" (Judges viii. 27). Barak had refused to go up against Jabin unless Deborah would join the venture (Judges v. 8). Samson had been in dalliance with Delilah. Last came Jephthah, who had, as we assume, sacrificed his daughter in fulfilment of a rash vow. No one supposes that any of the others are honored by mention in the chapter on account of his sin or error: why should that supposition be made in the case of Jephthah, at the cost of all the rules of orderly interpretation?

Having now answered the challenge as to Jephthah, I proceed to the case of Abraham. It would not be fair to shrink from touching it in its tenderest point. That point is nowhere expressly touched by the commendations bestowed upon Abraham in Scripture. I speak now of the special form, of the words that are employed. He is not commended because, being a father, he made all the preparations antecedent to plunging the knife into his son.



He is commended (as I read the text) because, having received a glorious promise, a promise that his wife should be a mother of nations, and that kings should be born of her (Gen. xvii. 6), and that by his seed the blessings of redemption should be conveyed to man, and the fulfilment of this promise depending solely upon the life of Isaac, he was, nevertheless, willing that the chain of these promises should be broken by the extinction of that life, because his faith assured him that the Almighty would find the way to give effect to His own designs (Heb. xi. 17-19). The offering of Isaac is mentioned as a completed offering, and the intended blood-shedding, of which I shall speak presently, is not here brought into view.

The facts, however, which we have before us, and which are treated in Scripture with caution, are grave and startling. A father is commanded to sacrifice his son. Before consummation, the sacrifice is interrupted. Yet the intention of obedience had been formed, and certified by a series of acts. It may have been qualified by a reserve of hope that God would interpose before the final act, but of this we have no distinct statement, and it can only stand as an allowable conjecture. It may be conceded that the narrative does not supply us with a complete statement of particulars. That being so, it behoves us to tread cautiously in approaching it. Thus much, however, I think, may further be said : the command was addressed to Abraham under conditions essentially different from those which now determine for us the limits of moral obligation.

For the conditions, both socially and otherwise, were indeed very different. The estimate of human life at the time was different. The position of the father in the family was different : its members were regarded as in some sense his property. There is every reason to suppose that, around Abraham in "the land of Moriah," the practice of human sacrifice as an act of religion was in vogue. But we may look more deeply into the matter. According to the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were placed under a law, not of consciously perceived right and wrong, but of simple obedience. The tree, of which alone they were forbidden to eat, was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Duty lay for them in following the command of the Most High, before and until they, or their descendants, should become capable of appreciating it by an ethical standard. Their condition

was greatly analogous to that of the infant, who has just reached the stage at which he can comprehend that he is ordered to do this or that, but not the nature of the thing so ordered. To the external standard of right and wrong, and to the obligation it entails *per se*, the child is introduced by a process gradually unfolded with the development of his nature, and the opening out of what we term a moral sense. If we pass at once from the epoch of Paradise to the period of the prophets, we perceive the important progress that has been made in the education of the race. The Almighty, in His mediate intercourse with Israel, deigns to appeal to an independently conceived criterion, as to an arbiter between His people and Himself. "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah i. 18). "Yet ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal, are not your ways unequal?" (Ezekiel xvii. 25). Between these two epochs how wide a space of moral teaching has been traversed! But Abraham, so far as we may judge from the pages of Scripture, belongs essentially to the Adamic period, far more than to the prophetic. The notion of righteousness and sin was not indeed hidden from him: transgression itself had opened that chapter, and it was never to be closed: but as yet they lay wrapped up, so to speak, in Divine command and prohibition. And what God commanded, it was for Abraham to believe that He himself would adjust to the harmony of His own character.

The faith of Abraham, with respect to this supreme trial, appears to have been centred in this, that he would trust God to all extremities, and in despite of all appearances. The command received was obviously inconsistent with the promises which had preceded it. It was also inconsistent with the morality acknowledged in later times, and perhaps too definitely reflected in our minds, by an anachronism easy to conceive, on the day of Abraham. There can be little doubt, as between these two points of view, that the strain upon his faith was felt mainly, to say the least, in connection with the first mentioned. This faith is not wholly unlike the faith of Job; for Job believed, in despite of what was to the eye of flesh an unrighteous government of the world. If we may still trust the Authorized Version, his cry was, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job xiii. 15). This cry was, however, the expression of one who did not expect to be

slain ; and it may be that Abraham, when he said, " My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering," not only believed explicitly that God would do what was right, but, moreover, believed implicitly that a way of rescue would be found for his son. I do not say that this case is like the case of Jephthah, where the introduction of difficulty is only gratuitous. I confine myself to these propositions. Though the law of moral action is the same everywhere and always, it is variously applicable to the human being, as we know from experience, in the various stages of his development ; and its first form is that of simple obedience to a superior whom there is every ground to trust. And further, if the few straggling rays of our knowledge in a case of this kind rather exhibit a darkness lying around us than dispel it, we do not even know all that was in the mind of Abraham, and are not in a condition to pronounce upon it, and cannot, without departure from sound reason, abandon that anchorage by which he probably held, that the law of Nature was safe in the hands of the Author of Nature, though the means of the reconciliation between the law and the appearances have not been fully placed within our reach.

But the Reply is not entitled to so wide an answer as that which I have given. In the parallel with the case of the Hindoo widow, it sins against first principles. An established and habitual practice of child-slaughter, in a country of an old and learned civilization, presents to us a case totally different from the issue of a command which was not designed to be obeyed and which belongs to a period when the years of manhood were associated in great part with the character that appertains to childhood.

It will already have been seen that the method of this Reply is not to argue seriously from point to point, but to set out in masses, without the labor of proof, crowds of imputations, which may overwhelm an opponent like balls from a *mitrailleuse*. As the charges lightly run over in a line or two require pages for exhibition and confutation, an exhaustive answer to the Reply within the just limits of an article is on this account out of the question ; and the only proper course left open seems to be to make a selection of what appears to be the favorite, or the most formidable and telling, assertions, and to deal with these in the serious way which the grave interests of the theme, not the manner of their presentation, may deserve.

It was an observation of Aristotle that weight attaches to the undemonstrated propositions of those who are able to speak in any given subject matter from experience. The Reply abounds in undemonstrated propositions. They appear, however, to be delivered without any sense of a necessity that either experience or reasoning are required in order to give them a title to acceptance. Thus, for example, the system of Mr. Darwin is hurled against Christianity as a dart which cannot but be fatal (p. 475) :

“ His discoveries, carried to their legitimate conclusion, ‘destroy the creeds and sacred scriptures of mankind.’ ”

This wide-sweeping proposition is imposed upon us with no exposition of the how or the why; and the whole controversy of belief one might suppose is to be determined, as if from St. Petersburg, by a series of *ukases*. It is only advanced, indeed, to decorate the introduction of Darwin’s name in support of the proposition, which I certainly should support and not contest, that error and honesty are compatible.

On what ground, then, and for what reason, is the system of Darwin fatal to scriptures and to creeds ? I do not enter into the question whether it has passed from the stage of working hypothesis into that of demonstration, but I assume, for the purposes of the argument, all that, in this respect, the Reply can desire.

It is not possible to discover, from the random language of the Reply, whether the scheme of Darwin is to sweep away all theism, or is to be content with extinguishing revealed religion. If the latter is meant, I should reply that the moral history of man, in its principal stream, has been distinctly an evolution from the first until now ; and that the succinct though grand account of the Creation in Genesis is singularly accordant with the same idea, but is wider than Darwinism, since it includes in the grand progression the inanimate world as well as the history of organisms. But, as this could not be shown without much detail, the Reply reduces me to the necessity of following its own unsatisfactory example in the bald form of an assertion, that there is no colorable ground for assuming evolution and revelation to be at variance with one another.

If, however, the meaning be that theism is swept away by Darwinism, I observe that, as before, we have only an unreasoned dogma or dictum to deal with, and, dealing perforce with the unknown, we are in danger of striking at a will of the wisp. Still,

I venture on remarking that the doctrine of Evolution has acquired both praise and dispraise which it does not deserve. It is lauded in the skeptical camp because it is supposed to get rid of the shocking idea of what are termed sudden acts of creation ; and it is as unjustly dispraised, on the opposing side, because it is thought to bridge over the gap between man and the inferior animals, and to give emphasis to the relationship between them. But long before the day either of Mr. Darwin or his grandfather, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, this relationship had been stated, perhaps even more emphatically by one whom, were it not that I have small title to deal in undemonstrated assertion, I should venture to call the most cautious, the most robust, and the most comprehensive of our philosophers. Suppose, says Bishop Butler (*Analogy*, Part 2, Chapt. 2), that it were implied in the natural immortality of brutes, that they must arrive at great attainments, and become (like us) rational and moral agents ; even this would be no difficulty, since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endowed with. And if pride causes us to deem it an indignity that our race should have proceeded by propagation from an ascending scale of inferior organisms, why should it be a more repulsive idea to have sprung immediately from something less than man in brain and body, than to have been fashioned according to the expression in *Genesis* (Chap. II., v. 7) “out of the dust of the ground” ? There are halls and galleries of introduction in a palace, but none in a cottage ; and this arrival of the creative work at its climax through an ever aspiring preparatory series, rather than by transition at a step from the inanimate mould of earth, may tend rather to magnify than to lower the creation of man on its physical side. But if belief has (as commonly) been premature in its alarms, has non-belief been more reflective in its exulting anticipations, and its pæans on the assumed disappearance of what are strangely enough termed sudden acts of creation from the sphere of our study and contemplation ?

One striking effect of the Darwinian theory of descent is, so far as I understand, to reduce the breadth of all intermediate distinctions in the scale of animated life. It does not bring all creatures into a single lineage, but all diversities are to be traced back, at some point in the scale and by stages indefinitely minute, to a common ancestry. All is done by steps, nothing by strides, leaps, or bounds ; all from protoplasm up to Shakespeare, and,

again, all from primal night and chaos up to protoplasm. I do not ask, and am incompetent to judge, whether this is among the things proven, but I take it so for the sake of the argument ; and I ask, first, why and whereby does this doctrine eliminate the idea of creation ? Does the new philosophy teach that if the passage from pure reptile to pure bird is achieved by a spring (so to speak) over a chasm, this implies and requires creation ; but that if reptile passes into bird, and rudimental into finished bird, by a thousand slight and but just discernible modifications, each one of these is so small that they are not entitled to a name so lofty, may be set down to any cause or no cause, as we please ? I should have supposed it miserably unphilosophical to treat the distinction between creative and non-creative function as a simply quantitative distinction. As respects the subjective effect on the human mind, creation in small, when closely regarded, awakens reason to admiring wonder, not less than creation in great : and as regards that function itself, to me it appears no less than ridiculous to hold that the broadly outlined and large advances of so-called Mosaism are creation, but the refined and stealthy onward steps of Darwinism are only manufacture, and relegate the question of a cause into obscurity, insignificance, or oblivion.

But does not reason really require us to go farther, to turn the tables on the adversary, and to contend that evolution, by how much it binds more closely together the myriad ranks of the living, aye, and of all other orders, by so much the more consolidates, enlarges, and enhances the true argument of design, and the entire theistic position ? If orders are not mutually related, it is easier to conceive of them as sent at haphazard into the world. We may, indeed, sufficiently draw an argument of design from each separate structure, but we have no further title to build upon the position which each of them holds as towards any other. But when the connection between these objects has been established, and so established that the points of transition are almost as indiscernible as the passage from day to night, then, indeed, each preceding stage is a prophesy of the following, each succeeding one is a memorial of the past, and, throughout the immeasurable series, every single member of it is a witness to all the rest. The Reply ought surely to dispose of these, and probably many more arguments in the case, before assuming so absolutely the rights of dictatorship, and laying it down that Darwinism, carried to its

legitimate conclusion (and I have nowhere endeavored to cut short its career), destroys the creeds and scriptures of mankind. That I may be the more definite in my challenge, I would, with all respect, ask the author of the Reply to set about confuting the succinct and clear argument of his countryman, Mr. Fiske, who, in the earlier part of the small work entitled "Man's Destiny" (Macmillan, London, 1887) has given what seems to me an admissible and also striking interpretation of the leading Darwinian idea in its bearings on the theistic argument. To this very partial treatment of a great subject I must at present confine myself ; and I proceed to another of the notions, as confident as they seem to be crude, which the Reply has drawn into its wide-casting net (p. 475):

"Why should God demand a sacrifice from man ? Why should the Infinite ask anything from the finite ? Should the sun beg of the glow-worm, and should the momentary spark excite the envy of the source of light ?"

This is one of the cases in which happy or showy illustration is, in the Reply before me, set to carry with a rush the position which argument would have to approach more laboriously and more slowly. The case of the glow-worm with the sun cannot but move a reader's pity, it seems so very hard. But let us suppose for a moment that the glow-worm was so constituted, and so related to the sun that an interaction between them was a fundamental condition of its health and life ; that the glow-worm must, by the law of its nature, like the moon, reflect upon the sun, according to its strength and measure, the light which it receives, and that only by a process involving that reflection its own store of vitality could be upheld ? It will be said that this is a very large *petitio* to import into the glow-worm's case. Yes, but it is the very *petitio* which is absolutely requisite in order to make it parallel to the case of the Christian. The argument which the Reply has to destroy is and must be the Christian argument, and not some figure of straw, fabricated at will. It is needless, perhaps, but it is refreshing, to quote the noble Psalm (Ps. l. 10, 12, 14, 15), in which this assumption of the Reply is rebuked. "All the beasts of the forest are mine; and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. . . . If I be hungry I will not tell thee ; for the whole world is mine, and all that is therein. . . . Offer unto God thanksgiving ; and pay thy vows

unto the Most Highest, and call upon Me in the time of trouble ; so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me." Let me try my hand at a counter-illustration. If the Infinite is to make no demand upon the finite, by parity of reasoning the great and strong should scarcely make them on the weak and small. Why then should the father make demands of love, obedience, and sacrifice, from his young child ? Is there not some flavor of the sun and glow-worm here ? But every man does so make them, if he is a man of sense and feeling ; and he makes them for the sake and in the interest of the son himself, whose nature, expanding in the warmth of affection and pious care, requires, by an inward law, to return as well as to receive. And so God asks of us, in order that what we give to Him may be far more our own than it ever was before the giving, or than it could have been unless first rendered up to Him, to become a part of what the gospel calls our treasure in heaven.

Although the Reply is not careful to supply us with *whys*, it does not hesitate to ask for them (p. 479):

" Why should an infinitely wise and powerful God destroy the good and preserve the vile ? Why should He treat all alike here, and in another world make an infinite difference ? Why should your God allow His worshipers, His adorers, to be destroyed by His enemies ? Why should He allow the honest, the loving, the noble to perish at the stake ? "

The upholders of belief or of revelation, from Claudian down to Cardinal Newman (see the very remarkable passage of the *Apologia pro vitâ suâ*, pp. 376-78), cannot and do not, seek to deny that the methods of divine government, as they are exhibited by experience, present to us many and varied moral problems, insoluble by our understanding. Their existence may not, and should not, be dissembled. But neither should they be exaggerated. Now exaggeration by mere suggestion is the fault, the glaring fault, of these queries. One who had no knowledge of mundane affairs beyond the conception they insinuate would assume that, as a rule, evil has the upper hand in the management of the world. Is this the grave philosophical conclusion of a careful observer, or is it a crude, hasty, and careless overstatement ?

It is not difficult to conceive how, in times of sadness and of storm, when the suffering soul can discern no light at any point of the horizon, place is found for such an idea of life. It is, of



course, opposed to the Apostolic declaration that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is (1 Tim. iv. 8), but I am not to expect such a declaration to be accepted as current coin, even of the meanest value, by the author of the Reply. Yet I will offer two observations founded on experience in support of it, one taken from a limited, another from a larger and more open sphere. John Wesley, in the full prime of his mission, warned the converts whom he was making among English laborers of a spiritual danger that lay far ahead. It was that, becoming godly, they would become careful, and, becoming careful, they would become wealthy. It was a just and sober forecast, and it represented with truth the general rule of life, although it be a rule perplexed with exceptions. But, if this be too narrow a sphere of observation, let us take a wider one, the widest of all. It is comprised in the brief statement that Christendom rules the world, and rules it, perhaps it should be added, by the possession of a vast surplus of material as well as moral force. Therefore the assertions carried by implication in the queries of the Reply, which are general, are because general untrue, although they might have been true within those prudent limitations which the method of this Reply appears especially to eschew.

Taking, then, these challenges as they ought to have been given, I admit that great believers, who have been also great masters of wisdom and knowledge, are not able to explain the inequalities of adjustment between human beings and the conditions in which they have been set down to work out their destiny. The climax of these inequalities is perhaps to be found in the fact that, whereas rational belief, viewed at large, founds the Providential government of the world upon the hypothesis of free agency, there are so many cases in which the overbearing mastery of circumstance appears to reduce it to extinction or paralysis. Now, in one sense, without doubt, these difficulties are matter for our legitimate and necessary cognizance. It is a duty incumbent upon us respectively, according to our means and opportunities, to decide for ourselves, by the use of the faculty of reason given us, the great questions of natural and revealed religion. They are to be decided according to the evidence; and, if we cannot trim the evidence into a consistent whole, then according to the balance of the evidence. We are not entitled, either for or against belief, to set up in this province any rule of investiga-

tion, except such as common-sense teaches us to use in the ordinary conduct of life. As in ordinary conduct, so in considering the basis of belief, we are bound to look at the evidence as a whole. We have no right to demand demonstrative proofs, or the removal of all conflicting elements, either in the one sphere or in the other. What guides us sufficiently in matters of common practice has the very same authority to guide us in matters of speculation ; more properly, perhaps, to be called the practice of the soul. If the evidence in the aggregate shows the being of a moral Governor of the world, with the same force as would suffice to establish an obligation to act in a matter of common conduct, we are bound in duty to accept it, and have no right to demand as a condition previous that all occasions of doubt or question be removed out of the way. Our demands for evidence must be limited by the general reason of the case. Does that general reason of the case make it probable that a finite being, with a finite place in a comprehensive scheme, devised and administered by a Being who is infinite, would be able either to embrace within his view, or rightly to appreciate, all the motives and the aims that may have been in the mind of the Divine Disposer ? On the contrary, a demand so unreasonable deserves to be met with the scornful challenge of Dante (Paradise xix. 79) :

Or tu chi sei, che vuoi sedere a scranna  
 Per giudicar da lungi mille miglia  
 Colla veduta corta d'una spanna ?

Undoubtedly a great deal here depends upon the question whether, and in what degree, our knowledge is limited. And here the Reply seems to be by no means in accord with Newton and with Butler. By its contempt for authority, the Reply seems to cut off from us all knowledge that is not at first hand ; but then also it seems to assume an original and first hand knowledge of all possible kinds of things. I will take an instance, all the easier to deal with because it is outside the immediate sphere of controversy. In one of those pieces of fine writing with which the Reply abounds, it is determined *obiter* by a backhanded stroke (N. A. R., p. 491) that Shakespeare is "by far the greatest of the human race." I do not feel entitled to assert that he is not ; but how vast and complex a question is here determined for us in this

airy manner ! Has the writer of the Reply really weighed the force, and measured the sweep of his own words ? Whether Shakespeare has or has not the primacy of genius over a very few other names which might be placed in competition with his, is a question which has not yet been determined by the general or deliberate judgment of lettered mankind. But behind it lies another question, inexpressibly difficult, except for the Reply, to solve. That question is, what is the relation of human genius to human greatness. Is genius the sole constitutive element of greatness, or with what other elements, and in what relations to them, is it combined ? Is every man great in proportion to his genius ? Was Goldsmith, or was Sheridan, or was Burns, or was Byron, or was Goethe, or was Napoleon, or was Alcibiades, no smaller, and was Johnson, or was Howard, or was Washington, or was Phocion or Leonidas no greater, than in proportion to his genius properly so called ? How are we to find a common measure, again, for different kinds of greatness ; how weigh, for example, Dante against Julius Cæsar ? And I am speaking of greatness properly so called, not of goodness properly so called. We might seem to be dealing with a writer whose contempt for authority in general is fully balanced, perhaps outweighed, by his respect for one authority in particular.

The religions of the world, again, have in many cases given to many men material for life-long study. The study of the Christian Scriptures, to say nothing of Christian life and institutions, has been to many and justly famous men a study “ never ending, still beginning ” ; not, like the world of Alexander, too limited for the powerful faculty that ranged over it ; but, on the contrary, opening height on height, and with deep answering to deep, and with increase of fruit ever prescribing increase of effort. But the Reply has sounded all these depths, has found them very shallow, and is quite able to point out (p. 490) the way in which the Saviour of the world might have been a much greater teacher than He actually was ; had He said anything, for instance, of the family relation, had He spoken against slavery and tyranny, had He issued a sort of *code Napoleon* embracing education, progress, scientific truth, and international law. This observation on the family relation seems to me beyond even the usual measure of extravagance when we bear in mind that, according to the Christian scheme, the Lord of heaven and earth

“was subject” (St. Luke ii. 51) to a human mother and a reputed human father, and that He taught (according to the widest and, I believe, the best opinion) the absolute indissolubility of marriage. I might cite many other instances in reply. But the broader and the true answer to the objection is, that the Gospel was promulgated to teach principles and not a code; that it included the foundation of a society in which those principles were to be conserved, developed, and applied; and that down to this day there is not a moral question of all those which the Reply does or does not enumerate, nor is there a question of duty arising in the course of life for any of us, that is not determinable in all its essentials by applying to it as a touchstone the principles declared in the Gospel. Is not, then, the *hiatus*, which the Reply has discovered in the teaching of our Lord, an imaginary *hiatus*? Nay, are the suggested improvements of that teaching really gross deteriorations? Where would have been the wisdom of delivering to an uninstructed population of a particular age a codified religion, which was to serve for all nations, all ages, all states of civilization? Why was not room to be left for the career of human thought in finding out, and in working out, the adaptation of Christianity to the ever varying movement of the world? And how is it that they who will not admit that a revelation is in place when it has in view the great and necessary work of conflict against sin, are so free in recommending enlargements of that Revelation for purposes, as to which no such necessity can be pleaded?

I have known a person who, after studying the old classical or Olympian religion for the third part of a century, at length began to hope that he had some partial comprehension of it, some inkling of what it meant. Woe is him that he was not conversant either with the faculties or with the methods of the Reply, which apparently can dispose in half an hour of any problem, dogmatic, historical, or moral; and which accordingly takes occasion to assure us that Buddha was “in many respects the greatest religious teacher this world has ever known, the broadest, the most intellectual of them all” (p. 491). On this I shall only say that an attempt to bring Buddha and Buddhism into line together is far beyond my reach, but that every Christian, knowing in some degree what Christ is, and what He has done for the world, can only be the more thankful if Buddha, or Confucius, or any other teacher

has in any point, and in any measure, come near to the outskirts of His ineffable greatness and glory.

It is my fault or my misfortune to remark, in this Reply, an inaccuracy of reference, which would of itself suffice to render it remarkable. Christ, we are told (pp. 492, 500), denounced the chosen people of God as "a generation of vipers." This phrase is applied by the Baptist to the crowd who came to seek baptism from him; but it is only applied by our Lord to Scribes or Pharisees (Luke iii. 7, Matthew xxiii. 33, and xii. 34), who are so commonly placed by Him in contrast with the people. The error is repeated in the mention of whited sepulchres. Take again the version of the story of Ananias and Sapphira. We are told (p. 494) that the Apostles conceived the idea "of having all things in common." In the narrative there is no statement, no suggestion of the kind; it is a pure interpolation (Acts iv. 32-7). Motives of a reasonable prudence are stated as matter of fact to have influenced the offending couple—another pure interpolation. After the catastrophe of Ananias "the Apostles sent for his wife"—a third interpolation. I refer only to these points as exhibitions of an habitual and dangerous inaccuracy, and without any attempt at present to discuss the case, in which the judgments of God are exhibited on their severer side, and in which I cannot, like the Reply, undertake summarily to determine for what causes the Almighty should or should not take life, or delegate the power to take it.

Again, we have (p. 486) these words given as a quotation from the Bible:

"They who believe and are baptized shall be saved, and they who believe not shall be damned; and these shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

The second clause thus reads as if applicable to the persons mentioned in the first; that is to say, to those who reject the tidings of the Gospel. But instead of its being a continuous passage, the latter section is brought out of another gospel (St. Matthew's) and another connection; and it is really written, not of those who do not believe, but of those who refuse to perform offices of charity to their neighbour in his need. It would be wrong to call this intentional misrepresentation; but can it be called less than somewhat reckless negligence?

It is a more special misfortune to find a writer arguing on the

same side with his critic, and yet for the critic not to be able to agree with him. But so it is with reference to the great subject of immortality, as treated in the Reply.

“The idea of immortality, that, like a sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection; and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mist and clouds of doubt and darkness, as long as love kisses the lips of death” (p. 483).

Here we have a very interesting chapter of the history of human opinion disposed of in the usual summary way, by a statement which, as it appears to me, is developed out of the writer's inner consciousness. If the belief in immortality is not connected with any revelation or religion, but is simply the expression of a subjective want, then plainly we may expect the expression of it to be strong and clear in proportion to the various degrees in which faculty is developed among the various races of mankind. But how does the matter stand historically? The Egyptians were not a people of high intellectual development, and yet their religious system was strictly associated with, I might rather say founded on, the belief in immortality. The ancient Greeks, on the other hand, were a race of astonishing, perhaps unrivalled, intellectual capacity. But not only did they, in prehistoric ages, derive their scheme of a future world from Egypt; we find also that, with the lapse of time and the advance of the Hellenic civilization, the constructive ideas of the system lost all life and definite outline, and the most powerful mind of the Greek philosophy, that of Aristotle, had no clear conception whatever of a personal existence in a future state.

The favorite doctrine of the Reply is the immunity of all error in belief from moral responsibility. In the first page (p. 473) this is stated with reserve as the “innocence of *honest* error.” But why such a limitation? The Reply warms with its subject; it shows us that no error can be otherwise than honest, inasmuch as nothing which involves honesty, or its reverse, can, from the constitution of our nature, enter into the formation of opinion. Here is the full blown exposition (p. 476):

“The brain thinks without asking our consent. We believe, or we disbelieve, without an effort of the will. Belief is a result.

It is the effect of evidence upon the mind. The scales turn in spite of him who watches. *There is no opportunity of being honest, or dishonest, in the formation of an opinion.* The conclusion is entirely independent of desire."

The reasoning faculty is, therefore, wholly extrinsic to our moral nature, and no influence is or can be received or imparted between them. I know not whether the meaning is that all the faculties of our nature are like so many separate departments in one of the modern shops that supply all human wants; that will, memory, imagination, affection, passion, each has its own separate domain, and that they meet only for a comparison of results, just to tell one another what they have severally been doing. It is difficult to conceive, if this be so, wherein consists the personality, or individuality, or organic unity of man. It is not difficult to see that while the Reply aims at uplifting human nature, it in reality plunges us (p. 475) into the abyss of degradation by the destruction of moral freedom, responsibility, and unity. For we are justly told that "reason is the supreme and final test." Action may be merely instinctive and habitual, or it may be consciously founded on formulated thought; but, in the cases where it is instinctive and habitual, it passes over, so soon as it is challenged, into the other category, and finds a basis for itself in some form of opinion. But, says the Reply, we have no responsibility for our opinions: we cannot help forming them according to the evidence as it presents itself to us. Observe, the doctrine embraces every kind of opinion, and embraces all alike, opinion on subjects where we like or dislike, as well as upon subjects where we merely affirm or deny in some medium absolutely colourless. For, if a distinction be taken between the colourless and the coloured medium, between conclusions to which passion or propensity or imagination inclines us, and conclusions to which these have nothing to say, then the whole ground will be cut away from under the feet of the Reply, and it will have to build again *ab initio*. Let us try this by a test case. A father who has believed his son to have been through life upright, suddenly finds that charges are made from various quarters against his integrity. Or a friend, greatly dependent for the work of his life on the co-operation of another friend, is told that that comrade is counterworking and betraying him. I make no assumption now as to the evidence or the result: but I

ask which of them could approach the investigation without feeling a desire to be able to acquit? And what shall we say of the desire to condemn? Would Elizabeth have had no leaning towards finding Mary Stuart implicated in a conspiracy? Did English judges and juries approach with an unbiassed mind the trials for the Popish plot? Were the opinions formed by the English Parliament on the Treaty of Limerick formed without the intervention of the will? Did Napoleon judge according to the evidence when he acquitted himself in the matter of the Duc d'Enghien? Does the intellect sit in a solitary chamber, like Galileo in the palace of the Vatican, and pursue celestial observation all untouched, while the turmoil of earthly business is raging everywhere around? According to the Reply, it must be a mistake to suppose that there is anywhere in the world such a thing as bias, or prejudice, or prepossession: they are words without meaning in regard to our judgments, for, even if they could raise a clamor from without, the intellect sits within, in an atmosphere of serenity, and, like Justice, is deaf and blind, as well as calm.

In addition to all other faults, I hold that this philosophy, or phantasm of philosophy, is eminently retrogressive. Human nature, in its compound of flesh and spirit, becomes more complex with the progress of civilization; with the steady multiplication of wants, and of means for their supply. With complication, introspection has largely extended, and I believe that, as observation extends its field, so far from isolating the intelligence and making it autocratic it tends more and more to enhance and multiply the infinitely subtle, as well as the broader and more palpable modes, in which the interaction of the human faculties is carried on. Who among us has not had occasion to observe, in the course of his experience, how largely the intellectual power of a man is affected by the demands of life on his moral powers, and how they open and grow, or dry up and dwindle, according to the manner in which those demands are met.

Genius itself, however purely a conception of the intellect, is not exempt from the strong influences of joy and suffering, love and hatred, hope and fear, in the development of its powers. It may be that Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, basking upon the whole in the sunshine of life, drew little supplementary force from its trials and agitations. But the history of one not less wonderful



than any of these, the career of Dante, tells a different tale ; and one of the latest and most searching investigators of his history (Scartazzini, Dante Alighieri, *seine zeit, sein leben, und seine werkes*, B. II. Ch. 5, p. 119 ; also pp. 438, 9. Biel, 1869) tells, and shows us, how the experience of his life co-operated with his extraordinary natural gifts and capabilities to make him what he was. Under the three great heads of love, belief, and patriotism, his life was a continued course of ecstatic or agonizing trials. The strain of these trials was discipline ; discipline was experience ; and experience was elevation. No reader of his greatest work will, I believe, hold with the Reply that his thoughts, conclusions, judgments were simple results of an automatic process, in which the will and affections had no share, that reasoning operations are like the whirl of a clock running down, and we can no more arrest the process or alter the conclusion than the wheels can stop the movement or the noise.\*

The doctrine taught in the Reply, that belief is, as a general, nay, universal, law, independent of the will, surely proves, when examined, to be a plausibility of the shallowest kind. Even in arithmetic, if a boy, through dislike of his employment, and consequent lack of attention, brings out a wrong result for his sum, it can hardly be said that his conclusion is absolutely and in all respects independent of his will. Moving onward, point by point, toward the centre of the argument, I will next take an illustration from mathematics. It has (I apprehend) been demonstrated that the relation of the diameter to the circumference of a circle is not susceptible of full numerical expression. Yet, from time to time, treatises are published which boldly announce that they set forth the quadrature of the circle. I do not deny that this may be purely intellectual error ; but would it not, on the other hand, be hazardous to assert that no grain of egotism or ambition

\* I possess the confession of an illiterate criminal, made, I think, in 1834, under the following circumstances: The new poor law had just been passed in England, and it required persons needing relief to go into the workhouse as a condition of receiving it. In some parts of the country, this provision produced a profound popular panic. The man in question was destitute at the time. He was (I think) an old widower with four very young sons. He rose in the night and strangled them all, one after another, with a blue handkerchief, not from want of fatherly affection, but to keep them out of the workhouse. The confession of this peasant, simple in phrase, but intensely impassioned, strongly reminds me of the Ugolino of Dante, and appears to make some approach to its sublimity. Such, in given circumstances, is the effect of moral agony on mental power.

has ever entered into the composition of any one of such treatises? I have selected these instances as, perhaps, the most favorable that can be found to the doctrine of the Reply. But the truth is that, if we set aside matters of trivial import, the enormous majority of human judgments are those into which the biasing power of likes and dislikes more or less largely enters. I admit, indeed, that the illative faculty works under rules upon which choice and inclination ought to exercise no influence whatever. But even if it were granted that in fact the faculty of discourse is exempted from all such influence within its own province, yet we come no nearer to the mark, because that faculty has to work upon materials supplied to it by other faculties; it draws conclusions according to premises, and the question has to be determined whether our conceptions set forth in those premises are or are not influenced by moral causes. For, if they be so influenced, then in vain will be the proof that the understanding has dealt loyally and exactly with the materials it had to work upon; inasmuch as, although the intellectual process be normal in itself, the operation may have been tainted *ab initio* by colouring and distorting influences which have falsified the primary conceptions.

Let me now take an illustration from the extreme opposite quarter to that which I first drew upon. The system called Thuggism, represented in the practice of the Thugs, taught that the act, which we describe as murder, was innocent. Was this an honest error? Was it due, in its authors as well as in those who blindly followed them, to an automatic process of thought, in which the will was not consulted, and which accordingly could entail no responsibility? If it was, then it is plain that the whole foundations, not of belief, but of social morality, are broken up. If it was not, then the sweeping doctrine of the present writer on the necessary blamelessness of erroneous conclusions tumbles to the ground like a house of cards at the breath of the child who built it.

In truth, the pages of the Reply, and the Letter which has more recently followed it,\* themselves demonstrate that what the writer has asserted wholesale he overthrows and denies in

\* NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW for January, 1888, "Another Letter to Dr. Field."

detail. "You will admit," says the Reply (p. 477), "that he who now persecutes for opinion's sake is infamous." But why? Suppose he thinks that by persecution he can bring a man from soul-destroying falsehood to soul-saving truth, this opinion may reflect on his intellectual debility: but that is his misfortune, not his fault. His brain has thought without asking his consent; he has believed or disbelieved without an effort of the will (p. 476). Yet the very writer, who has thus established his title to think, is the first to hurl at him an anathema for thinking. And again, in the Letter to Dr. Field (N. A. R., vol. 146, p. 33), "the dogma of eternal pain" is described as "that infamy of infamies." I am not about to discuss the subject of future retribution. If I were, it would be my first duty to show that this writer has not adequately considered either the scope of his own arguments (which in no way solve the difficulties he presents) or the meaning of his words; and my second would be to recommend his perusal of what Bishop Butler has suggested on this head. But I am at present on ground altogether different. I am trying another issue. This author says we believe or disbelieve without the action of the will, and, consequently, belief or disbelief is not the proper subject of praise or blame. And yet, according to the very same authority, the dogma of eternal pain is what?—not "an error of errors," but an "infamy of infamies;" and though to hold a negative may not be a subject of moral reproach, yet to hold the affirmative may. Truly it may be asked, is not this a fountain which sends forth at once sweet waters and bitter?

Once more. I will pass away from tender ground, and will endeavor to lodge a broader appeal to the enlightened judgment of the author. Says Odysseus in the Iliad (B. II.) *οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη*: and a large part of the world, stretching this sentiment beyond its original meaning, have held that the root of civil power is not in the community, but in its head. In opposition to this doctrine, the American written Constitution, and the entire American tradition, teach the right of a nation to self-government. And these propositions, which have divided and still divide the world, open out respectively into vast systems of irrecconcilable ideas and laws, practices and habits of mind. Will any rational man, above all will any American, contend that these conflicting systems have been adopted, upheld, and enforced on

one side and the other, in the daylight of pure reasoning only, and that moral, or immoral, causes have had nothing to do with their adoption? That the intellect has worked impartially, like a steam-engine, and that selfishness, love of fame, love of money, love of power, envy, wrath, and malice, or again bias, in its least noxious form, have never had anything to do with generating the opposing movements, or the frightful collisions in which they have resulted? If we say that they have not, we contradict the universal judgment of mankind. If we say they have, then mental processes are not automatic, but may be influenced by the will and by the passions, affections, habits, fancies, that sway the will; and this writer will not have advanced a step toward proving the universal innocence of error, until he has shown that propositions of religion are essentially unlike almost all other propositions, and that no man ever has been, or from the nature of the case can be, affected in their acceptance or rejection by moral causes.\*

To sum up. There are many passages in these noteworthy papers, which, taken by themselves, are calculated to command warm sympathy. Towards the close of his final, or latest letter, the writer expresses himself as follows (N. A. R., vol. 146, p. 46):

“Neither in the interest of truth, nor for the benefit of man, is it necessary to assert what we do not know. No cause is great enough to demand a sacrifice of candor. The mysteries of life and death, of good and evil, have never yet been solved.”

How good, how wise are these words! But coming at the close of the controversy, have they not some of the ineffectual features of a death-bed repentance? They can hardly be said to represent in all points the rules under which the pages preceding them have been composed; or he, who so justly says that we ought not to assert what we do not know, could hardly have laid down the law as we find it a few pages earlier (*ibid*, p. 40) when it is pronounced that “an infinite God has no excuse for leaving his children in doubt and darkness.” Candor and upright inten-

\* The chief part of these observations were written before I had received the January number of the *REVIEW*, with Col. Ingersoll's additional letter to Dr. Field. Much of this letter is specially pointed at Dr. Field, who can defend himself, and at Calvin, whose ideas I certainly cannot undertake to defend all along the line. I do not see that the Letter adds to those, the most salient, points of the earlier article which I have endeavored to select for animadversion.

tion are indeed every where manifest amidst the flashing coruscations which really compose the staple of the articles. Candor and upright intention also impose upon a commentator the duty of formulating his animadversions. I sum them up under two heads. Whereas we are placed in an atmosphere of mystery, relieved only by a little sphere of light round each of us, like a clearing in an American forest (which this writer has so well described), and rarely can see farther than is necessary for the direction of our own conduct from day to day, we find here, assumed by a particular person, the character of an universal judge without appeal. And whereas the highest self-restraint is necessary in these dark but, therefore, all the more exciting inquiries, in order to maintain the ever quivering balance of our faculties, this writer chooses to ride an unbroken horse, and to throw the reins upon his neck. I have endeavored to give a sample of the results.

W. E. GLADSTONE.